

Message Text

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ORIGIN ACDA-19

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ADP-00 AEC-11 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

EA-11 EUR-25 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 IO-13 L-03 NASA-04

NEA-10 NSAE-00 NSC-10 OIC-04 PA-03 PRS-01 RSC-01

SCI-06 SS-15 MBFR-03 USIA-15 SAJ-01 /202 R

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ARA/MEX:SHANKLE

ARA/PAN:HSTEIN

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R 210015Z AUG 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 165447

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM

SUBJ: OPANAL: TREATMENT OF PANAMA CANAL ISSUE

REFS: (A) STATE 164264; (B) STATE 164787

1. AP WIRE SERVICE, DATELINED MEXICO CITY AUGUST 18
TRANSMITTED FOLLOWING STORY: "TALKS BETWEEN U.S. AND
LATIN AMERICAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN ORGANIZATION (OPANAL)
OFFICIALS TO INCLUDE THE PANAMA CANAL ZONE IN THE
TLATELOLCO TREATY WHICH PROHIBITS ATOMIC ARMS IN THE AREA
HAVE BEEN 'FAVORABLE,' THE PACT OVERSEER SAID HERE TODAY.

'I HAVE MET WITH U.S. OFFICIALS ON A PANAMANIAN REQUEST
AND I VIEW THE SITUATION AS FAVORABLE AND OPTIMISTIC,'
OPANAL SECRETARY GENERAL HECTOR GROSS ESPIELL, OF
URUGUAY, SAID.

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THE U.S. HAS SIGNED THE TREATY BUT ONLY TO COVER LATIN

AMERICA AND NOT ITS TERRITORIES, INCLUDING THE PANAMA CANAL ZONE, GROSS ESPIELL SAID. HOWEVER, THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH CLAIMS SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ZONE, WANTS THE AREA INCLUDED IN THE TREATY TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF STOCKPILING OF NUCLEAR ARMS THERE, GROSS ESPIELL SAID.

THE TREATY, KEPT IN MEXICO CITY, BANS THE USE, STOCKPILING AND TRANSPORT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA.

'IN THE LAST COMMUNICATION FROM PANAMA, WE LEARNED THE GOVERNMENT IS AT A LOSS TO CHECK WHETHER ANY NUCLEAR ACTIVITY IS CONDUCTED WITHIN THE ZONE; THIS TROUBLES THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT,' GROSS ESPIELL SAID.

THE PANAMA CANAL ZONE IS CONTROLLED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT BASED ON A 1903 TREATY ALTHOUGH BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEGUN TALKS FOR A NEW TREATY TO GUARANTEE PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY BUT THE CONVERSATIONS ARE DEADLOCKED."

2. FOLLOWING CONTINGUENCY PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR DEPARTMENT'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING BUT TOPIC NOT RAISED:

"WHILE WE DID HAVE DISCUSSIONS LAST WEEK WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF OPANAL, THEY DID NOT RELATE TO US ACTION TO BRING THE CANAL ZONE UNDER THE TREATY. WE SIMPLY PROVIDED THE OPANAL OFFICIAL WITH A REAFFIRMATION THAT WE WERE IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH OUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL II TO THE TREATY." ROGERS

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